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RUEHLJ/AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA PRIORITY 0086
RUEHVJ/AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO PRIORITY 0064
RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE PRIORITY 1002
RUEHTI/AMEMBASSY TIRANA PRIORITY 1171
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB PRIORITY 0287
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ATHENS 000097

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SUBJECT: FM BAKOYANNIS DISCUSSES RPG ATTACK, KOSOVO,
AFGHANISTAN, MACEDONIA

REF: A) STATE 4834 B) STATE 5652 C) STATE 4760

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CHARLES RIES. REASON: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In his meeting with FM Bakoyannis on January 17, Ambassador updated FM Bakoyannis on investigations into the January 12 RPG strike on the Embassy, emphasizing that the U.S. was satisfied with the cooperative attitude and thorough approach of Greek authorities to date. Bakoyannis emphasized the GOG's determination to find those responsible. Having just returned from Belgrade, Bakoyannis expressed concern over a possible Kosovo status decision while a new Serbian government is being formed, because it could lead Kostunica to ally himself with nationalist, rather than democratic forces. Ambassador underscored the importance of moving forward in accordance with the timeline; delay could only promote instability. Outlining our goals for the January 26 Informal NATO ministerial, Ambassador pushed for greater commitment by the GOG to efforts in Afghanistan (including lifting caveats). While Bakoyannis still needed inter-ministerial agreement, she suggested the GOG would offer both tanks for Afghan forces and civilian personnel for development work with the Hungarian-led PRT, as well as three or six-month extension of Kabul Role 2 medical unit. Visibly put out by the Macedonian government's decision to rename its airport, she stressed the political consequences for ND in an election year. She planned, in her statements, to remind Skopje that good-neighbourly relations were an EU obligation. Looking ahead to the GAERC, the Ambassador stressed the importance of effective implementation of UNSCR 1737 and that the U.S. would like to see the EU also adopt additional, buttressing measures, including the halt to official export credits to Iran.

¶2. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Bakoyannis asked for a pull-aside meeting with the Secretary either on the margins of the Lebanon support meeting in Paris (January 25) or at the NAC ministerial in Brussels (January 26) to cover three issues: (a) GOG determination to find those responsible for the RPG attack on the embassy; (b) results of PM Karamanlis' visit to Balkan capitals; (c) GOG discussions with PM Siniora and the situation in Lebanon.

END SUMMARY.

RPG ATTACK -- UPDATE ON INVESTIGATION

¶2. (C) In their first meeting since the January 12 RPG attack on the Embassy, the Ambassador updated FM Bakoyannis

on the investigation. Working cooperatively, both U.S. and Greek investigators had reviewed the physical evidence and interviewed witnesses. The U.S. was satisfied with the quality of the forensic analysis and cooperation with GOG officials. However, the press seemed determined to focus on the political aspects of the investigation. For that reason, the Embassy would avoid commenting on such issues as the composition or oversight of the GOG's counter-terrorism team.

Bakoyannis welcomed the approach, noting that she was also working to keep those involved focused and on message. While human rights organizations were critical of the GOG's new intention to increase use of Olympics-era street surveillance cameras in future to deter terrorist attacks, she said the PM was determined, and legal concerns could be addressed.

Bakoyannis emphasized the importance of finding those responsible; the GOG authorities had identified several possible suspects and were monitoring their actions closely, including by wiretaps. Bakoyannis added that the reaction of the Greek public was heartening; there was no support for the attack. The Ambassador and Bakoyannis agreed that we would continue to work together closely.

KARAMANLIS VISIT TO BELGRADE/KOSOVO STATUS DECISION

¶3. (C) Having just returned from a visit to Belgrade with PM Karamanlis, Bakoyannis suggested that the Radicals were losing ground to Kostunica. Therefore, it was likely that Tadic and the Radicals would have roughly equal weight following the elections. In combination with others, that could give the pro-EU, democratic forces the lead -- provided Kostunica formed the coalition government on that basis. But what would happen if the Kosovo issue arose before the coalition was formed? Would Kostunica move to the right? Or

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would it prove impossible to form a government, resulting in another election three months later?

¶4. (C) Ambassador reviewed ref B timeline, noting that delay would only risk destabilizing the situation further. It was not in our interests for KFOR to be seen as an obstacle to a status decision, which has been long anticipated, or an "occupier." It was essential to keep the process on track -- which would also strengthen moderates in the Kosovo Albanian community. Greece's dialogue with the government in Belgrade would play an important role over the coming weeks. Bakoyannis agreed on Greece's role and repeated that Karamanlis had pressed Kostunica to build a coalition from pro-democratic parties. While Kostunica gave no commitment on this point so as not to undermine his "bargaining power," Karamanlis believed Kostunica would join the Democrats. Bakoyannis added that the GOG was also building its ties with the Kosovar Albanian community; they had recently established an office in Pristina headed by an Ambassador. Bakoyannis looked forward to the results of the forthcoming Contact Group-SECP meeting, and to discussions at the NATO ministerial.

NATO MINISTERIAL/AFGHANISTAN STRATEGIC GOALS

¶5. (C) The Ambassador pressed FM Bakoyannis on deliverables for the January 26 informal NATO Ministerial (ref a). Lifting of caveats was particularly essential to ensure maximum effectiveness. Bakoyannis told him that -- pending approval from relevant ministries -- Greece planned to (a) maintain its field hospital in Kabul for an additional three to six months, provided budgetary resources could be obtained from the Finance Ministry; (b) provide an (unspecified) number of tanks for Afghan forces; (c) contribute personnel to work on agricultural reconstruction, most likely with the Hungarian-led PRT.

MACEDONIA AIRPORT RENAMING/NIMETZ VISIT

¶6. (C) Bakoyannis told the Ambassador that the government in Skopje was pursuing a nationalist course for its own ends.

UN Special Envoy Nimetz (who met with Bakoyannis on January 12) told her that he considered Skopje's approach was counter-productive. For Greece, Skopje's actions had major domestic political consequences. Neither ND nor PASOK could afford to lose voters in northern Greece. For that reason, Bakoyannis said, she would be "obliged" to do more: she would point out that Skopje was not fulfilling its EU obligation to pursue good-neighborly relations. While the GOG had been prepared to begin a program of visits and dialogue this year to set the stage for a possible settlement late in the year (N.B. after likely Greek elections), that would now have to wait. Skopje needed to realize it could not engage in irredentist propaganda without prompting a reaction from Greece. Bakoyannis also commented, "I could even understand the airport naming was essential in building national unity, but the fact is the Albanian population doesn't care about Alexander."

IRAN EXPORT CREDITS

¶ 7. (C) Ambassador underscored the importance of action to ensure that Iran did not pursue "business as usual" despite UNSCR 1737. Drawing on ref c points, he underscored the importance of curtailing export credits to Iran. The upcoming GAERC would provide an opportunity to ensure compliance with the UNSCR and move forward with additional diplomatic measures by the EU. Bakoyannis stated that there was no concrete EU proposals yet for additional measures such as a credit freeze; she promised to consult with the Minister of Economy.

IRAQ STRATEGY

¶ 8. (C) Following the Ambassador's briefing on the President's Iraq strategy, Bakoyannis expressed concern regarding whether an increase of troops would prove effective. The GOG continued to believe that engaging Iran and Syria would be important. The Ambassador pointed out that the Iraqis themselves had asked for the lead in this regard; the results of their efforts would be critical. However, at this time the Administration believed an entreaty

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to Iran from the U.S. would be seen simply as a diplomatic coup for Iran, and would bring no effective results. Bakoyannis admitted that, for Greece, a major concern is the effect of developments in Iraq on the government of Turkey. A "nervous" Turkey was an issue for Greece. The Ambassador pointed out that the U.S. also valued its relationship with Turkey and had an ongoing dialogue with Turkey on the PKK and other Iraq-related issues.

VISA WAIVER -- PROGRESS?

¶ 9. (C) After reviewing plans for the January 28-30 visit of Codel Smith, Bakoyannis asked whether it would be possible to have progress on Greece's entry into the visa waiver program (VWP) by the summer. The Ambassador welcomed the Greek Ministry of Public Order/MFA team travelling to Washington next week, and said he would be meeting with them before departure. He added the timing of visa waiver decisions would depend on Congressional attitudes and the substantive issues that arise.

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